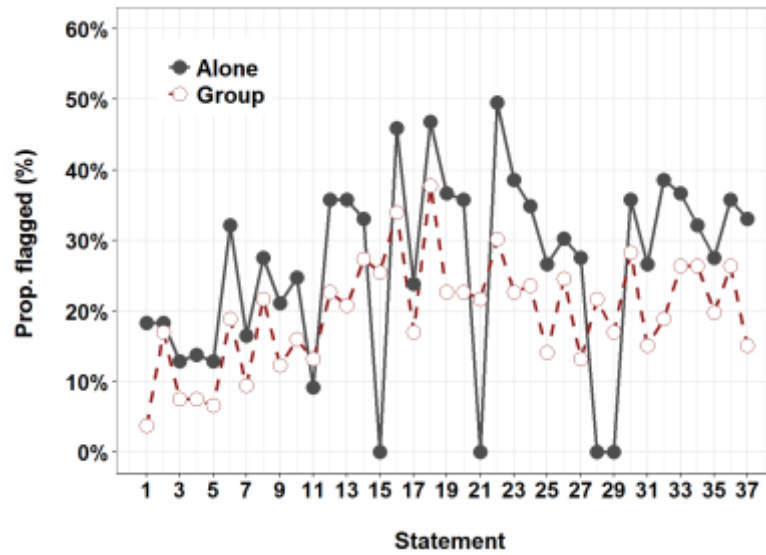


## Supporting Information

**Fig. S1.** Proportion of flagged responses at the statement level as a function of social presence (Experiment 2).



Statements are ordered by ambiguity level from least ambiguous (90% consensus) to most ambiguous (50% consensus) based on the pretest reported in the supplementary materials. With the exception of five statements (ordered at positions 11, 15, 21, 28, and 29), in all other cases participants flagged more extensively in the Alone compared to Group condition.

**Table S1.** Summary of key design parameters, Experiments 1-8.

<b>Experiment</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Statements [#]</b>	<b>Incentives [true/false/flag]</b>	<b>Group size (# others)</b>	<b>% Flagging reduction in Group (vs. Alone)</b>
1: Headlines	175	News headlines [36]	+5/-5/0 cents	102	34%
2: Ambiguity	215	Headlines with varying ambiguity [37]	+1/-1/+0.25 points (1 point = 5 cents)	102	25%
3: Congresspeople	165	Biographical information [38]	+1/-1/-0.25 points (lottery for \$100 Amazon gift card)	30	55%
4: Social media	371	News headlines [36]	+1/-1/-0.25 points (1 point = 4 cents)	102	45%
5: Co-attention	308	News headlines [36]	+1/-1/0 points (1 point = 5 cents)	102	38%
6: Candidates	289	Political claims [50]	+1/-1/-0.25 points (lottery for \$100 Amazon gift card)	30 vs. 102	35% (Group-Small) 48% (Group-Large)
7: Accountability	330	News headlines [36]	+1/-1/0 points (1 point = 5 cents)	102	31%
8: Vigilance	385	News headlines [36]	+1/-1/0 points (1 point = 5 cents)	102	40%

The last column denotes the percentage reduction in the proportion of statements flagged (fact-checked) in the Group relative to the Alone condition (under baseline, unmoderated conditions).

## News Consumption

The survey on news consumption was part of a pretest we conducted for selecting ambiguous statements (news headlines ostensibly published by an existing U.S. media organization). We asked 122 participants recruited from MTurk ( $M_{\text{age}} = 34$ ; 52% female) where they get their news from. Participants could choose multiple (non-exclusive) options from a choice set of different sources. Seventy-eight percent of respondents reported receiving at least some of their news from social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit; 70% from conventional news media (newspaper, news websites, or TV news); 46% from word of mouth; 38% from other media sources (TV shows, magazines, etc.); 19% from online blogs; and 10% from any other source (Podcasts, etc.).

In a second survey drawn from the same population, 330 participants ( $M_{\text{age}} = 35$ ; 42% female) allocated 100 points across different sources of news as a measure of the relative proportion of news they receive from each source. Then, people indicated how frequently they read news in general (1 = *Very rarely or not at all*; 7 = *Extremely often*). On average, participants indicated receiving 47% of their total news from conventional news media (e.g., newspapers, news websites, TV news), 31% from social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc.), 20% from other media (e.g., magazines, TV shows, radio, blogs), and 2% from other sources. Those who categorized themselves as frequent news readers (across all platforms) received more news from conventional news (vs. social) media: The frequency of news consumption negatively predicted proportion of news received from social media [ $B = -4.32$ ,  $SE = 1.01$ ,  $t(328) = -4.30$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ] but positively predicted proportion of news received from traditional (nonsocial) news media [ $B = 5.56$ ,  $SE = 1.01$ ,  $t(328) = 5.51$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ].

## Proofreading

To more directly test the hypothesis that perceived social presence reduces vigilance, we examined how well people performed on a proofreading task. In a separate experiment, participants ( $n = 189$ ;  $M_{\text{age}} = 36$ ; 46% female) were given four minutes to read a series of short passages and identify all the errors appearing in the text. For the duration of the “typing task,” people either saw their own username displayed on the side of the screen (Alone condition) or the usernames of 102 other respondents described as currently logged in (Group condition; Fig. S27-S30).

While the number of total words participants wrote did not vary across the conditions, those exposed to others found fewer correct errors than those who saw only their names [ $M_{\text{Alone}} = 10.69$ ,  $SD = 4.64$ ;  $M_{\text{Group}} = 9.77$ ,  $SD = 5.05$ ; Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 4.16$ ,  $P = 0.04$ ], suggesting that social presence may impair vigilance when processing information (or, at least, in the context of the error detection task we used).

## Source Credibility

In a separate posttest, we asked participants ( $n = 819$ ;  $M_{\text{age}} = 35$ ; 41% female) to imagine reading claims originating from one of four sources: (i) U.S. scientists in an academic forum, (ii) U.S. politicians running for office in a political forum, (iii) randomly generated by the computer in a public forum, or (iv) an existing media organization's website. After being assigned to either an Alone or Group condition (102 others), participants predicted how many of the 36 statements would be true, false, and how many they would flag (fact-check). Then, they reported the extent to which they would trust information originating from academic/scientific forums, political forums, and the news media (1 = *Not at all*; 7 = *Extremely*).

People found politicians less trustworthy [ $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ] compared to scientists [ $M = 4.86$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ;  $F(1,811) = 652.75$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ] or the news media [ $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ;  $F(1,811) = 48.13$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ]. A 2 (social presence)  $\times$  4 (source) analysis of variance on the predicted number of "true" statements revealed only a main effect of source [ $F(3,811) = 12.45$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ] such that people deemed claims from scientists more truthful [ $M = 17.62$ ,  $SD = 6.00$ ] than those from politicians [ $M = 14.41$ ,  $SD = 5.82$ ], a computer [ $M = 15.31$ ,  $SD = 4.22$ ], or news media [ $M = 16.53$ ,  $SD = 6.01$ ]. There was no effect of social presence on predicted true statements [ $F(1,811) = 0.17$ ,  $P = 0.68$ ], nor a source  $\times$  social presence interaction [ $F(3,811) = 0.48$ ,  $P = 0.70$ ]. Hence, social presence did not influence perceived truthfulness for any of the sources, both those for whom the maxim of quality was likely operating (scientists, news media) and those for whom they were not (politicians). Similar results held for "false" and "flagged" responses.

## Following Up

If people are reluctant to fact-check in a social setting because it implies distrust, they should be more willing to “follow up” (e.g., requesting more detail as you mentioned) since doing so does not carry the same “stigma.” To directly test this idea, we ran another experiment where participants ( $n = 386$ ;  $M_{\text{age}} = 35$ ; 55% female) evaluated the same 36 news headlines from Experiment 1 in an Alone or Group condition (102 others). We introduced a second factor of Frame by varying the presentation of the third, “flagging” option: For half the participants, the third option was labeled as “flag” (described as an external fact-check, as with the previous experiments); for the other half, it was labeled “follow up” (described as a way to request more details from the news organization that made the statements). Across both frames, participants read they would learn the actual veracity of a statement if they selected the third option.

A  $2$  (social presence)  $\times 2$  (frame) analysis of variance on the number of “flagged” (i.e., third option) statements revealed only a main effect of social presence: Those in the Group condition chose the third option less often than those in the Alone condition [ $M_{\text{Alone}} = 6.74$  (19%),  $SD = 7.40$ ;  $M_{\text{Group}} = 4.69$  (13%),  $SD = 7.41$ ;  $F(1,382) = 7.46$ ,  $P = 0.007$ ]. There was no effect of frame [ $M_{\text{Flag}} = 5.48$  (15%),  $SD = 7.40$ ;  $M_{\text{Follow up}} = 5.95$  (17%),  $SD = 7.40$ ;  $F(1,382) = 0.37$ ,  $P = 0.54$ ], nor a social presence  $\times$  frame interaction [ $F(1,382) = 0.17$ ,  $P = 0.68$ ]. These data suggest that people continued to suppress their fact-checking tendencies in the company of others even when fact-checking was not described as such (but rather portrayed in more “benign” terms).

## Statement Selection

### *Experiments 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8*

In the same pretest ( $n = 122$ ) used for the first news consumption survey, we asked respondents to evaluate a series of 59 statements. Specifically, people indicated (i) whether they thought each statement was true or false, and (ii) how confident they were about their response (1 = *Not at all*; 7 = *Very much*). A subset of the political campaign statements pretested for Experiment 6 were included here under the guise of news headlines (e.g., “The number of food stamp beneficiaries has gone up two-and-a-half times in the last five years.”; “After the shootings of Dallas policemen, nearly 500 people applied to the Dallas Police Department in 12 days.”).

We quantified the ambiguity of a statement in terms of consensus—viz., the proportion of participants who identified it as being either true or false—and selected a total of 36 statements (out of 59) that were rated as relatively ambiguous (i.e., identified as true by approximately 50% of the sample and false by the other 50%; see below). The letters immediately preceding each statement indicate its actual veracity (T/F), while the boldface numbers in brackets at the end of statements denote the percentage of people who responded true and false, respectively ([%T/%F]).

1. [F] Scientists have officially declared the Great Barrier Reef - the world's largest coral reef system that lies off the coast of Queensland, Australia - to be dead. **[41/59]**
2. [F] More than 40 Virginia state troopers resigned as volunteer chaplains in 2008 because of a departmental rule requiring that prayers at public events be non denominational. **[44/56]**
3. [T] Some 22 million official White House emails, the majority of which were sent and received via private, non-government servers, were reported as lost or missing during the George W. Bush administration. **[55/45]**
4. [F] Fifteen new officers will be hired to patrol the Golden Gate Bridge specifically to search for people looking to jump to their death. **[55/45]**
5. [F] Mr. Kaine has missed 148 of 370 roll call votes held in the Senate since the beginning of 2015. **[55/45]**
6. [T] America has the lowest percentage of Americans working today of any year since 1977. **[50/50]**
7. [F] In 2015, less than 40 percent of firearm deaths in the U.S. were the result of suicide. **[57.5/42.5]**
8. [F] President Barack Obama has taken less vacation days than any other president in a generation. **[52.5/47.5]**
9. [T] One group that monitors nonprofits, Charity Watch, found that the Clinton Foundation spends 88 percent of its money on programming. **[52.5/47.5]**
10. [T] The number of Border Patrol agents is near an all-time high at more than 20,000. **[58/42]**
11. [T] Donald Trump's campaign had promised not to change the government's Medicare program for seniors. **[52/48]**
12. [F] The number of police officers killed in the line of duty has risen by almost 50 percent compared to this point last year. **[50/50]**
13. [T] Since early 2010, 14.8 million jobs have been added in the longest streak of private-sector job growth in history. **[54/45]**

14. [F] Auto sales in the United States reached the lowest point in 2015, with about 15.4 million vehicles sold. [55/45]
15. [T] In the 1990s, senator Bernie Sanders voted against the Brady Bill, which required background checks on gun purchases. [44/56]
16. [F] Nearly \$7 of every \$10 donated to presidential candidates in this election cycle from the oil and gas industry has gone to the Democratic party. [45/55]
17. [T] 30 years ago, America was the leader in quantity and quality of high school diplomas. [58/42]
18. [T] The United States is ranked 5th in the world in terms of number of college-degree holders amongst the age group of 25 to 64-year-olds. [55/45]
19. [F] The number of food stamp beneficiaries has gone up two-and-a-half times in the last five years. [44/56]
20. [T] The National Catastrophe Insurance Reserve is funded by private insurers contributing a portion of the premiums they collect from policyholders. [43.5/56.5]
21. [F] The 2013 immigration bill expanded President Obama's ability to bring Syrian refugees to this country without mandating any meaningful background checks. [46/54]
22. [F] Under the current procedure, if someone on a terror watch list tries to buy a gun, authorities are notified, even if it's through a private dealer. [55/45]
23. [T] After initially agreeing with Republicans on an amount for Zika funding, Democrats derailed it. [43/57]
24. [F] Ukraine voluntarily gave up its nuclear weapons because the United States said it would ensure its territorial integrity from Russia. [49/51]
25. [T] After the shootings of Dallas policemen, nearly 500 people applied to the Dallas Police Department in 12 days. [59/41]
26. [F] One in three American women will have had an abortion by the time she reaches the age of 45. [47.5/52.5]
27. [F] Within 24 hours of Britain's vote to leave the European Union, Americans lost \$50 billion from our 401(k)s. [41/59]
28. [T] People who get the death penalty tend to live in places with overaggressive prosecutors and defense lawyers who aren't up to the task of defending against them. [49/51]
29. [T] Ninety percent of Americans want our background check system strengthened and expanded to cover more gun sales. [55/45]
30. [T] The United States accepted fewer than 1,700 Syrian refugees in fiscal year 2015. [48/52]
31. [F] Undocumented immigrants pay \$12 billion a year into Social Security. [44/56]
32. [T] The U.S. is the only developed country in the world that doesn't guarantee workers in private businesses any paid days off at all. [55/45]
33. [F] The last time that a Senate of a different party than the president in the White House confirmed a Supreme Court nominee was 1888. [47.5/52.5]
34. [T] There are 13x more fed qualified health centers than Planned Parenthood locations throughout the country. [46/54]
35. [T] The European Commission is preparing to rule in the next few weeks on whether Apple owes the Irish government billions in underpaid taxes. [52.5/47.5]
36. [F] We admit about 100,000 permanent immigrants from the Middle East every year. [59/41]



## Experiment 2

Based on the same pretest ( $n = 122$ ) used in selecting the stimuli for Experiment 1, we chose a total of 37 statements of varying ambiguity for Experiment 2. These ranged from relatively unambiguous (90% consensus) to completely ambiguous (50% consensus). For each statement, we constructed a “clarity index” given by its absolute deviation from complete ambiguity and computed as the absolute value of the difference between the percentage of people identifying the statement as true and the percentage of people identifying it as false (with bounds between 0 and 10). For example, a statement with either a [90% T / 10% F] or [10% T / 90% F] distribution would receive a clarity index of 8 in either case, while a statement with a split consensus [50% T / 50% F] would receive a clarity index of 0.

We randomly injected 12 less ambiguous statements into a set of 25 more ambiguous ones from the selection used in Experiment 1, such that the final distribution featured a wide range of ambiguity levels (see below). These 37 statements featured clarity indices ranging from 0 to 7.97 and are listed below in ascending order of clarity (i.e., from least to most ambiguous). The letters immediately preceding each statement indicate its actual veracity (T/F), while the boldface numbers in brackets at the end of statements denote the percentage of people who responded true and false, respectively ([%T/%F]).

1. [F] There are fewer public libraries than McDonald’s in the US - a total of 16,541 including branches. **[90/10]**
2. [T] Donald J. Trump declared a \$916 million loss on 1995 tax records. **[80/20]**
3. [F] 60% of Americans now support legalizing marijuana. **[80/20]**
4. [T] About 20 million Americans have gained health coverage under the Affordable Care Act from its passage in 2010 to early 2016. **[79/21]**
5. [T] 40% of Americans have experienced tension with friends or family over the 2016 presidential election. **[79/21]**
6. [F] The United States was caught repainting some of their fighter jets in Russian air force colors for a false flag bombing. **[22/78]**
7. [F] If you swipe a chipped card -debit or credit- at a point-of-sale terminal instead of inserting it into the reader, you become liable for any fraudulent transactions. **[22/78]**
8. [T] Young women account for a shocking 74 percent of all new HIV infections among adolescents in Africa. **[70/30]**
9. [T] 97% of low-income students rely on school for internet access. **[70/30]**
10. [T] U.S. Social Security Administration paid deceased beneficiaries approximately \$31 million. **[70/30]**
11. [F] A diet rich in vitamin D can reverse tooth decay and regrow portions of teeth lost to cavities. **[30/70]**
12. [F] On September, officers of the Bell County Sheriff Department have mistakenly shot an unarmed coal miner, thinking he was a black criminal. **[31/69]**
13. [F] We admit about 100,000 permanent immigrants from the Middle East every year. **[59/41]**
14. [F] Within 24 hours of Britain’s vote to leave the European Union, Americans lost \$50 billion from our 401(k)s. **[41/59]**
15. [T] The number of Border Patrol agents is near an all-time high at more than 20,000. **[59/41]**

16. [T] After initially agreeing with Republicans on an amount for Zika funding, Democrats derailed it. [42.5/57.5]
17. [F] In 2015, less than 40 percent of firearm deaths in the U.S. were the result of suicide. [57.5/42.5]
18. [T] The National Catastrophe Insurance Reserve is funded by private insurers contributing a portion of the premiums they collect from policyholders. [44/56]
19. [F] Undocumented immigrants pay \$12 billion a year into Social Security. [44/56]
20. [T] In the 1990s, senator Bernie Sanders voted against the Brady Bill, which required background checks on gun purchases. [44/56]
21. [F] More than 40 Virginia state troopers resigned as volunteer chaplains in 2008 because of a departmental rule requiring that prayers at public events be non-denominational. [44/56]
22. [F] Mr. Kaine has missed 148 of 370 roll call votes held in the Senate since the beginning of 2015. [55/45]
23. [F] Nearly \$7 of every \$10 donated to presidential candidates in this election cycle from the oil and gas industry has gone to the Democratic party. [45/55]
24. [F] Auto sales in the United States reached the lowest point in 2015, with about 15.4 million vehicles sold. [55/45]
25. [T] Ninety percent of Americans want our background check system strengthened and expanded to cover more gun sales. [55/45]
26. [T] The United States is ranked 5th in the world in terms of number of college-degree holders amongst the age group of 25 to 64-year-olds. [55/45]
27. [F] The number of food stamp beneficiaries has gone up two-and-a-half times in the last five years. [55/45]
28. [T] Some 22 million official White House emails, the majority of which were sent and received via private, non-government servers, were reported as lost or missing during the George W. Bush administration. [55/45]
29. [F] Fifteen new officers will be hired to patrol the Golden Gate Bridge specifically to search for people looking to jump to their death. [55/45]
30. [T] There are 13x more fed qualified health centers than Planned Parenthood locations throughout the country. [46/54]
31. [T] Since early 2010, 14.8 million jobs have been added in the longest streak of private-sector job growth in history. [54/46]
32. [T] One group that monitors nonprofits, CharityWatch, found that the Clinton Foundation spends 88 percent of its money on programming. [52.5/47.5]
33. [F] The last time that a Senate of a different party than the president in the White House confirmed a Supreme Court nominee was 1888. [47.5/52.5]
34. [T] The European Commission is preparing to rule in the next few weeks on whether Apple owes the Irish government billions in underpaid taxes. [52.5/47.5]
35. [T] The United States accepted fewer than 1,700 Syrian refugees in fiscal year 2015. [47.5/52.5]
36. [F] Ukraine voluntarily gave up its nuclear weapons because the United States said it would ensure its territorial integrity from Russia. [49/51]
37. [F] The number of police officers killed in the line of duty has risen by almost 50 percent compared to this point last year. [50/50]

### **Experiment 3**

One hundred and sixty-eight MTurk respondents ( $M_{\text{age}} = 35$ , 42% female) evaluated a series of 141 statements about real U.S. congressmen and congresswomen (i.e., claims regarding their biography, political background, and congressional positions). Participants indicated (i) whether they thought each statement was true or false, and (ii) how confident they were about their response (1 = *Not at all*; 7 = *Very much*). We selected 38 statements determined as relatively ambiguous (see below). The letters immediately preceding each statement indicate its actual veracity (T/F), while the boldface numbers in brackets at the end of statements denote the percentage of people who responded true and false, respectively ([%T/%F]).

1. [F] Congressman Alex Mooney led a force of over 3,500 Special Operations personnel in Iraq. **[49/51]**
2. [T] Congressman Chaka Fattah from Pennsylvania resigned his seat after he was convicted on bribery and money laundering. **[53/47]**
3. [T] The founder of Congressional Black Caucus which now has over 40 members, Congressman Charles Rangel had compared President Bush to Ku Klux Klan leader. **[53/47]**
4. [F] Congressman Chris Smith sent a letter to the Obama Administration urging them to reject efforts to house migrant children at Navy airfields. **[60/40]**
5. [F] Congressman Dan Newhouse announced a \$2.625 million grant to Hispanic-Serving Institutions Department of Education. **[57/43]**
6. [T] Congressman David Cicilline signed the MARCH for Military Women Act to let military perform abortions in cases of rape or incest. **[48/52]**
7. [F] Congressman David McKinley voted against allowing an employee compensatory time off for working overtime. **[57/43]**
8. [T] Congressman Don Young of Alaska is now the 3rd ranking overall member of the House of Representatives. **[48/52]**
9. [T] Congressman Doug LaMalfa is a fourth generation rice farmer himself. **[57/43]**
10. [F] Congressman Evan Jenkins is the Co-Chairman of Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus. **[52/48]**
11. [T] Congressman French Hill was named the Top Manager of the Year by the Sales and Marketing Executive International in 2013. **[50/50]**
12. [F] Congressman Gregg Harper participated in the impeachment hearings against President Nixon. **[58/42]**
13. [F] A House ethics committee subpanel found Congressman Jason Smith guilty of 11 of the 13 charges of ethics violations against him. **[53/47]**
14. [T] Congressman Jeff Fortenberry is the co-chair of the Caucus on Religious Minorities in the Middle East. **[45/55]**
15. [F] Congressman Jim Langevin has been awarded over 50 honorary degrees from universities including Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Princeton University. **[58/42]**
16. [F] Congressman Jody Hice is the original co-sponsor of the Email Privacy Act. **[55/45]**
17. [F] Congressman John Carney introduced the Cell Phone Right to Know Act, a bill to grant a consumer's right-to-know by providing for warning labels (e.g., radiation level) on cell phones. **[51/49]**

18. [T] Before his swearing-in ceremony, Congressman Keith Ellison announced that he would use the Koran, the Muslim holy book, instead of the traditional Bible. [40/60]
19. [F] Congressman Mac Thornberry co-authored Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act to increase AMTRAK funding. [51/49]
20. [T] Congressman Matt Salmon led multiple U.S. delegations to China, one of which secured the release of political prisoner. [61/39]
21. [T] Congressman Mike Thompson is the first Vietnam veteran elected to the California State Senate. [50/50]
22. [T] Congressman Pete Olson co-sponsored State Marriage Defense Act to allow states' definition of marriage supersede federal gay marriage. [59.5/40.5]
23. [F] Citizens Against Government Waste recently named Congressman Robert Wittman as a "perfect vote" in the House fighting wasteful government spending. [58/42]
24. [F] Congressman Ron Kind co-authored Children's Prayers Resolution to allow children time to pray for, or silently reflect upon, the country during the war against terrorism. [55/45]
25. [F] Congressman Sean Duffy introduced a bill to prohibit Federal funding of National Public Radio. [57/43]
26. [F] Congressman Steve Chabot supported amendment to facilitate gay marriage. [54.5/55.5]
27. [T] The National Taxpayers Union rated Congressman Tom McClintock "the best vote for taxpayers in the House" in 2014 and 2015. [53/47]
28. [F] Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence is the first black Republican woman ever elected to Congress. [55/45]
29. [F] Congresswoman Diane Black of Tennessee is the first disabled woman ever to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. [60/40]
30. [T] Congresswoman Elise Stefanik is the first member of her family to graduate from college. [49/51]
31. [T] At the age of 30, Congresswoman Elise Stefanik is the youngest woman ever elected to Congress. [58.5/41.5]
32. [F] Congresswoman Gwen Moore from Wisconsin worked as a fellow under Ted Sorensen, the legendary speechwriter for President John F. Kennedy. [59/41]
33. [T] Congresswoman Kristi Noem introduced Campus Accountability and Safety Act to Combat Sexual Assault at Colleges and Universities. [59/41]
34. [T] Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo is the first woman to represent Guam in the U.S. House of Representatives. [51/49]
35. [T] When Congresswoman Mia Love was a city councilwoman, the city had 1700% population growth in a decade. [52/48]
36. [F] Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici from Oregon was one of only three women out of 43 lawyers to work on the inquiry into the possible impeachment of President Richard Nixon. [53/47]
37. [T] Born in Thailand, Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth lost both of her legs in the Iraq War and was awarded the Purple Heart. [53/47]
38. [F] Congresswoman Virginia Foxx urged social security administration to provide equal benefits to same-sex spouses. [53/47]

### Experiment 6

We recruited 291 participants ( $M_{\text{age}} = 34$ , 51% female) from MTurk who evaluated a series of 82 total statements and indicated whether they thought each statement was true or false, their confidence in their answers, and whether they perceived the statement to be liberal versus conservative.

For each statement, we constructed a “liberal index” given by the ratio of people who identified the statement as liberal and those who identified it as conservative. We selected 50 statements (25 liberal, 25 conservative) for the final set (see below). The conservative candidate’s average liberal index was 0.49 across statements (i.e., about twice as many people believed they sounded conservative rather than liberal), while the liberal candidate’s average liberal index was 2.81 across statements (i.e., about three times as many people believed they sounded liberal rather than conservative). The letters immediately preceding each statement indicate its actual veracity (T/F), while the boldface numbers in brackets at the end of statements denote the percentage of people who responded true and false, respectively ([%T/%F]).

All statements evaluated contained either factual claims that could be objectively verified (e.g., “Homicides last year increased by the largest amount in 25 years”) as well as personal claims that are supposedly based on factual grounds (e.g., “When I was a governor, in the face of partisan attacks, more than 10,000 jobs were saved, which led the state into economic recovery”). A 2 (frame: objective, personal)  $\times$  3 (social presence: alone, group-small, group-large) mixed analysis of variance revealed no effect of frame on the number of statements flagged [ $F(1,284) = 0.37$ ,  $P = 0.54$ ], identified as true [ $F(1,284) = 0.92$ ,  $P = 0.33$ ], or identified as false [ $F(1,284) = 1.17$ ,  $P = 0.28$ ]. As such, we evaluated participants’ responses to all 50 statements in our analyses.

#### (A) Conservative

1. [T] Homicides last year increased by the largest amount in 25 years. **[60/40]**
2. [F] 53% of Americans disapprove of Obamacare. **[54/46]**
3. [F] The number of food stamp beneficiaries has gone up two-and-a-half times in the last five years. **[56/44]**
4. [Unknown] My campaign platform includes the biggest investment in new, well-paying jobs since World War II. **[60/40]**
5. [F] China is going to have twice the number of submarines we have in just over a decade. **[59/41]**
6. [T] Under the federal Controlled Substance Act, marijuana is listed in the same Schedule I as heroin as one of the “most dangerous” drugs that have “no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse.” **[55/45]**
7. [T] The National Catastrophe Insurance Reserve is funded by private insurers contributing a portion of the premiums they collect from policyholders. **[43/57]**
8. [Unknown] When I was a governor, in the face of partisan attacks, more than 10,000 jobs were saved, which led the state into economic recovery. **[59/41]**
9. [F] The 2013 immigration bill expanded President Obama’s ability to bring Syrian refugees to this country without mandating any meaningful background checks. **[50/50]**
10. [T] Every Republican Senate candidate has now announced whether or not they support the Senate taking up the Supreme Court vacancy. **[47/53]**
11. [F] Under the current procedure, if someone on a terror watch list tries to buy a gun, authorities are notified, even if it's through a private dealer. **[45/55]**

12. [T] After initially agreeing with Republicans on an amount for Zika funding, Democrats derailed it. **[42.5/57.5]**
13. [F] Ukraine voluntarily gave up its nuclear weapons because the United States said it would “ensure (its) territorial integrity from Russia.” **[49/51]**
14. [Unknown] My bill extended aspects of the Bush tax cuts such as child credit expansions and changes to marriage bonuses and penalties. **[60/40]**
15. [F] Today, it is more difficult to enlist in the U.S. military than it is to enroll in college. **[40/60]**
16. [T] After the shootings of Dallas policemen, nearly 500 people applied to the Dallas Police Department in 12 days. **[60/40]**
17. [Unknown] According to a poll, there was a 34 percent decrease in violent crime in my state when I served as a governor. **[47/53]**
18. [T] In 2015, 45 percent of the children refugees came from just two countries: Syria and Afghanistan. **[47.5/52.5]**
19. [F] One in three American women will have had an abortion by the time she reaches the age of 45. **[45/55]**
20. [Unknown] I enlisted international partners to provide International Space Station (ISS) cargo re-supply and eventually alternate means for sending crews to the ISS. **[55.5/44.5]**
21. [F] After Britain’s vote to leave the European Union, within 24 hours, Americans lost \$50 billion from our 401(k)s. **[43/57]**
22. [Unknown] My opponent labeled police as racists. **[56/44]**
23. [Unknown] I opposed the only multilateral trade deal that came before the Senate while I was there. **[53/47]**
24. [Unknown] I am the only candidate from either party who said from the very beginning that I will not raise taxes on the middle class. **[60/40]**
25. [F] Drug overdoses are the No. 1 form of accidental death in the U.S. **[56/44]**

(B) Liberal

1. [T] Today 57% of women are in work, while the share of men is just under 70%. **[60/40]**
2. [Unknown] I have expanded and made refundable the child and dependent care credit. **[49/51]**
3. [F] Two million more Latinos are in poverty today than eight years ago. **[50/50]**
4. [T] Last year, 244 suspected terrorists walked into gun shops and attempted to purchase a firearm; 223 were able to get the firearm. **[50/50]**
5. [T] The people who get the death penalty tend to live in places with overaggressive prosecutors and defense lawyers who aren’t up to the task of defending against them — that’s a double whammy. **[59/41]**
6. [F] Our economy is so much stronger than 10 years ago. Nearly 15 million new private-sector jobs! **[47/53]**
7. [F] Every Republican nominee since Richard Nixon, who at one time was under an audit, has released their tax documents. **[48/52]**
8. [Unknown] I negotiated the first agreement - ever - where China and India officially committed to reduce their emissions. **[56/44]**
9. [T] Ninety percent of Americans want our background check system strengthened and expanded to cover more gun sales. **[56/44]**
10. [Unknown] I remain one of the poorer members of the United States Senate. **[45/55]**

11. [T] The United States only accepted fewer than 1,700 Syrian refugees in fiscal year 2015. **[60/40]**
12. [Unknown] I have regulated pollution from large Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) - which raise more than 40 percent of U.S. livestock - with fines for those who violate tough air and water quality standards. **[56/44]**
13. [F] Undocumented immigrants pay \$12 billion a year into Social Security. **[45/55]**
14. [Unknown] I voted to double the amount of unpaid wages and benefits workers can claim in bankruptcy court against their employer. **[50/50]**
15. [T] The U.S. is the only developed country in world that doesn't guarantee workers in private businesses any paid days off at all. **[51/49]**
16. [Unknown] The proportion of women in the workforce has increased by more than 30% due to a bill I introduced. **[40/60]**
17. [F] There are more than twice as many fake clinics as there are legitimate abortion providers in the United States. **[48/52]**
18. [Unknown] I have posted to my website full copies of my tax returns since 2007. **[59/41]**
19. [F] The last time that a Senate of a different party than the president in the White House confirmed a Supreme Court nominee was 1888. **[48/52]**
20. [Unknown] I'm the only candidate in this election, on either side, who Wall Street financiers and hedge fund managers are actually running ads against. **[59/41]**
21. [Unknown] My opponent deducted \$200,000 in property taxes on a house he didn't live in. **[56/44]**
22. [T] There are 13x more fed qualified health centers than Planned Parenthood locations throughout the country. **[46/54]**
23. [T] The European Commission is preparing to rule in the next few weeks on whether Apple owes the Irish government billions in underpaid taxes. **[53.5/46.5]**
24. [F] We admit about 100,000 permanent immigrants from the Middle East every year. **[55/45]**
25. [Unknown] My opponent spent \$7 billion to bring electricity to Africa, failed miserably. **[48/52]**

### **Effects of Social Presence on True/False Responses**

Our focus in this article has been on fact-checking behavior; however, it is worth noting the effects of social presence on “true” and “false” responses. In particular, the data suggest that unlike the patterns for flagging rates, social presence did not as consistently change people’s belief in the given information. Table S1 summarize these findings for each experiment.



**Table S2.** Mean percentage of responses identified as true and false by social presence.

<b>Experiment</b>	<b>% True responses: Alone vs. Group</b>	<b><math>B_{\text{True}}</math></b>	<b>% False responses: Alone vs. Group</b>	<b><math>B_{\text{False}}</math></b>
1: Headlines	46 [14] vs. 51 [13]	4.97* (2.04)	37 [14] vs. 38 [14]	0.71 (2.07)
2: Ambiguity	42 [17] vs. 48 [13]	5.90** (2.09)	32 [11] vs. 32 [13]	0.72 (1.67)
3: Congresspeople	57 [18] vs. 59 [15]	2.20 (2.67)	30 [14] vs. 35 [13]	4.40* (2.12)
4: Social media	50 [13] vs. 53 [11]	2.63 (1.40)	44 [11] vs. 43 [12]	-0.30 (1.38)
5: Co-attention	43 [18] vs. 46 [14]	3.14 (1.91)	33 [14] vs. 37 [14]	4.59** (1.67)
6: Candidates	49 [16] vs. 51 [14]	2.51 (1.82)	40 [14] vs. 42 [12]	2.31 (1.64)
7: Accountability	46 [15] vs. 48 [13]	0.74 (0.94)	36 [13] vs. 40 [12]	-1.45 (0.85)
8: Vigilance	43 [14] vs. 49 [14]	7.01*** (1.61)	36 [15] vs. 38 [13]	2.07 (1.70)

\* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $P < 0.001$

Standard deviations are in brackets, and standard errors are in parentheses.

## **Effects of Statement Veracity and Social Presence on Responses**

We tested whether the actual veracity of a statement interacts with social presence to affect responses. Tables S2 and S3 summarize these findings. In sum, the asymmetry in flagging rates as a function of social presence (Alone vs. Group conditions) remains when we incorporate statements' "true" veracity in the model.

Note that across experiments, we also found a main effect of actual veracity on the percentage of statements identified as true and false—namely, statements that were actually true (vs. false) were evaluated as more likely to be true, and statements that were actually false (vs. true) were evaluated as more likely to be false.

**Table S3.** The effects of social presence (Alone vs. Group), statement veracity (True vs. False), and their interaction on the mean proportion of statements flagged.

Experiment	% Flagged responses: Alone vs. Group	$B_{\text{Social presence}}$	$B_{\text{Veracity}}$	$B_{\text{Social presence} \times \text{Veracity}}$
1: Headlines	17 [20] vs. 11 [14]	-7.84* (2.64)	0.19** (2.64)	3.41* (3.73)
2: Ambiguity	26 [22] vs. 20 [18]	-7.42* (2.83)	1.62** (2.81)	1.64 (4.00)
3: Congresspeople	13 [20] vs. 7 [14]	-7.83* (2.69)	-3.16** (3.08)	2.75* (3.81)
4: Social media	7 [10] vs. 4 [7]	-3.12* (1.04)	-0.53 (1.26)	1.57 (1.47)
5: Co-attention	24 [26] vs. 17 [19]	-8.07** (2.72)	-0.69 (3.13)	0.72 (3.84)
6: Candidates	12 [17] vs. 7 [13]	-4.29** (1.65)	0.29 (1.90)	0.02 (2.33)
7: Accountability	18 [20] vs. 12 [14]	-5.40** (1.30)	0.94 (1.79)	-1.33 (3.25)
8: Vigilance	21 [17] vs. 12 [14]	-8.27*** (2.06)	0.89 (1.52)	-1.59 (2.91)

\* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $P < 0.001$

Parameter estimates are unstandardized beta coefficients (social presence: 0 = Alone, 1 = Group; veracity: 0 = False, 1 = True). Standard deviations are in brackets, and standard errors are in parentheses.

**Table S4.** Simple effects of social presence (at each level of statement veracity) on proportion of flagged responses.

Experiment	Veracity	% Flagged responses: Alone vs. Group	<i>B</i> <sub>Social presence</sub>
1: Headlines	True	17 [21] vs. 13 [16]	-3.98 (2.78)
	False	17 [19] vs. 9 [13]	-7.87** (2.49)
2: Ambiguity	True	27 [23] vs. 21 [20]	-5.78* (2.96)
	False	26 [22] vs. 18 [17]	-7.42** (2.69)
3: Congresspeople	True	11 [19] vs. 6 [13]	-5.08* (2.59)
	False	15 [21] vs. 7 [14]	-7.83** (2.79)
4: Social media	True	6 [10] vs. 5 [9]	-1.60 (1.08)
	False	7 [11] vs. 4 [7]	-3.12** (0.98)
5: Co-attention	True	24 [26] vs. 17 [20]	-7.34** (2.72)
	False	25 [26] vs. 17 [20]	-8.07** (2.72)
6: Candidates	True	10 [16] vs. 5 [12]	-4.28* (1.74)
	False	9 [15] vs. 5 [11]	-4.29** (1.55)
7: Accountability	True	18 [21] vs. 12 [15]	-6.73** (2.30)
	False	18 [21] vs. 12 [14]	-5.40* (2.29)
8: Vigilance	True	22 [19] vs. 12 [15]	-9.85*** (2.06)
	False	21 [19] vs. 12 [15]	-8.27*** (2.06)

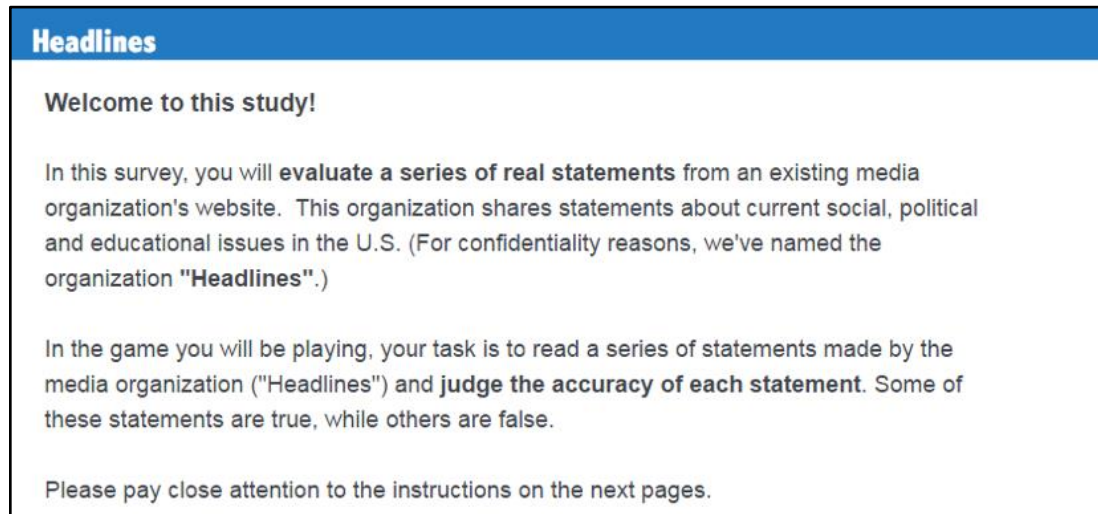
\* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $P < 0.001$

Standard deviations are in brackets, and standard errors are in parentheses.

## Participant Instructions and Stimuli

### *Experiment 1*

**Fig. S2.** Introductory instructions (Experiments 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8).



The image shows a screenshot of a web-based instruction page. At the top, there is a blue header bar with the word "Headlines" in white. Below this, the text is as follows:

**Welcome to this study!**

In this survey, you will **evaluate a series of real statements** from an existing media organization's website. This organization shares statements about current social, political and educational issues in the U.S. (For confidentiality reasons, we've named the organization "**Headlines**".)

In the game you will be playing, your task is to read a series of statements made by the media organization ("Headlines") and **judge the accuracy of each statement**. Some of these statements are true, while others are false.

Please pay close attention to the instructions on the next pages.

**Fig. S3.** Login page (Experiments 1, 2, 8).

**Headlines**

This game will simulate a typical user experience on Headlines' website. **All participants currently taking this study must log in.**

First, please type your **first name** and **initial of your last name** (e.g., Kate S., James O.) so that we can make a personalized login account for you during the study. Your account will be deleted after the experiment.

**No one will be able to see your answers or choices** other than the researcher.

**Fig. S4.** Task-specific instructions (similar for Experiments 2, 4, 5, 7, 8).

**Headlines**

**INSTRUCTIONS (please read carefully)**

Below are some important instructions about the game. You will be asked some questions about them later.

**GAME RULES**

You will judge the accuracy of **36 statements** made by an existing organization called "Headlines". Some of these statements are true, while others are false.

After reading each statement, you will choose 1 of 3 options: **TRUE**, **FALSE**, **FLAG**

- **TRUE**: you believe the statement is true;
- **FALSE**: you believe the statement is false;
- **FLAG**: you can **fact-check the accuracy** of the statement. At the end of the survey you will learn the actual accuracy of each statement you choose to flag.

Bonus Reward Rules

You have the chance to earn a **bonus depending on your performance**. Below are the rules on how scoring and payment are calculated:

You will earn a bonus for correctly identifying whether each statement is true or false. Specifically:

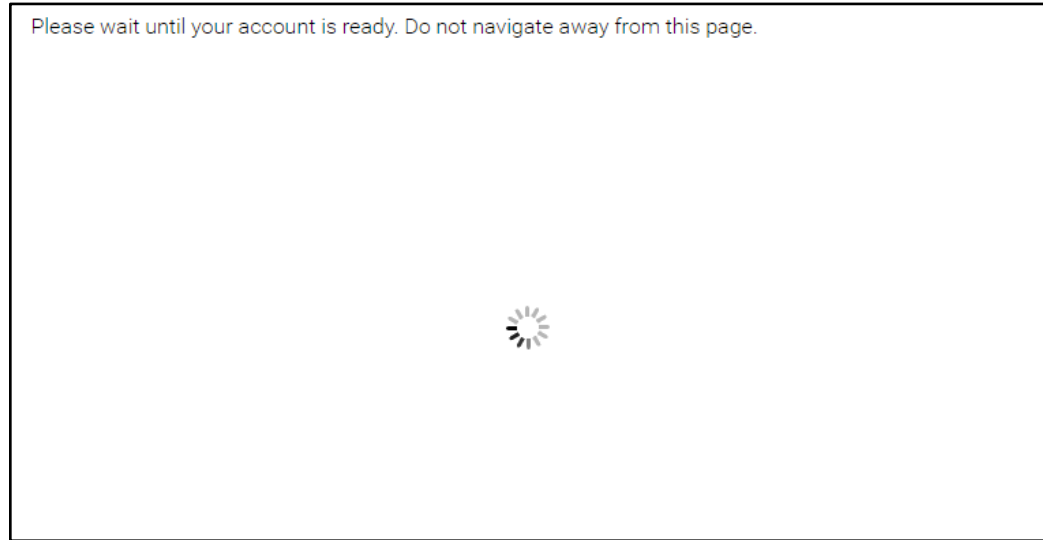
- For each **CORRECTLY** identified statement, you will **earn 5 cents (+\$0.05)**
- For each **INCORRECTLY** identified statement, you will **lose 5 cents (-\$0.05)**
- For each fact-checking **FLAG** you select, you will not receive or lose anything (**\$0**)

For example: If you correctly identify 25 statements, incorrectly identify 5 statements, and flag 6 statements, your **total bonus payment** would be:  $25 * (\$0.05) + 5 * (-\$0.05) + 6 * (\$0) = \$1$ .

The bonus payment will range from **\$0 (minimum)** to **\$1.80 (maximum)**.

The instructions were identical for: Experiment 2 with the exception of: 37 statements; flagging gives +0.25 points (1 point = 5 cents); Experiment 4 with the exception of: flagging gives -0.25 points (1 point = 4 cents); Experiments 5, 7, and 8 with the exception of: scoring expressed in terms of points rather than cents directly (1 point = 5 cents).

**Fig. S5.** Transition page (similar for Experiments 2-8).

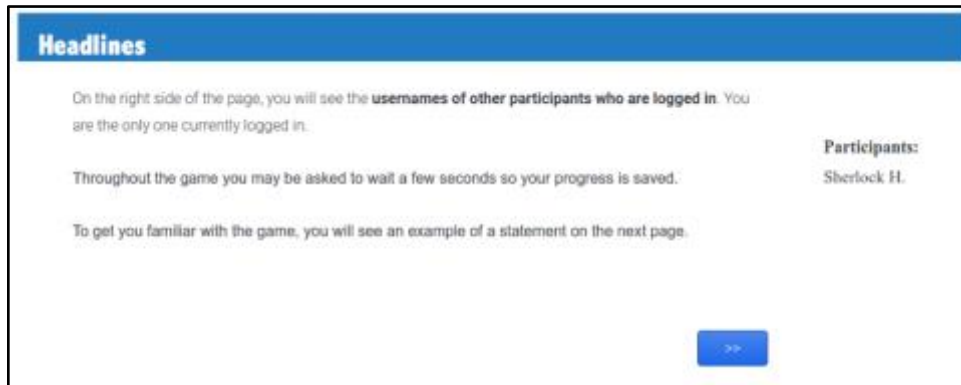


In the Group conditions for Experiment 3, the transition text read: "Please wait until your group is ready."

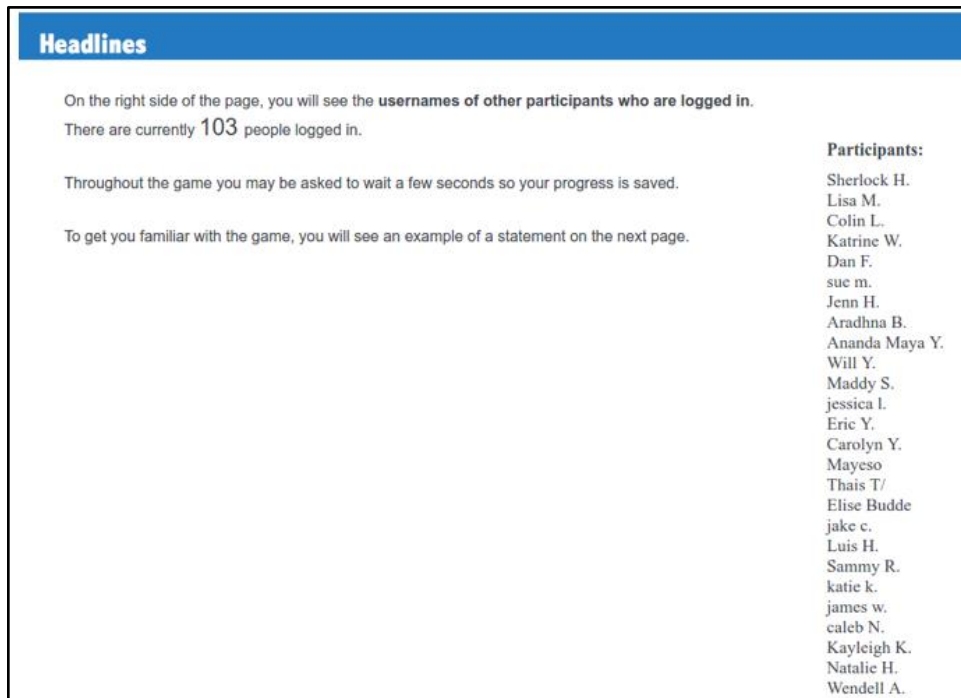


**Fig. S6.** Statement evaluation task instructions, Alone condition (**A**) vs. Group condition (**B**) (Experiments 1, 2, 4, 7, 8).

**A**



**B**



Experiment 4 also featured a Social Media condition, where the “Headlines” banner was replaced by a “Facebook” one. The list of usernames in the Group conditions was generated using a random name generator and designed to appear realistic to participants (complete with typos, variation in formatting, etc.).

### ***Experiment 3***

**Fig. S7.** Introductory instructions (Experiment 3).

Welcome to this survey.

The survey is about different modes of political communication on the internet.

In a moment, you will play a game where you read political statements. The game will simulate a typical user's experience in an online political forum.

First, please write down your first name and initial of your last name (e.g., Kate S., James O.), so that we can make a personalized log-in account for you in the forum. Your account will be deleted after the experiment.

**Fig. S8.** Task-specific instructions (Experiment 3).

Before we begin, please read the instructions below carefully.

GAME RULES

- Each participant will read a series of statements about current U.S. Congressmen/women and judge the accuracy of each of them. Some of these statements are true, while others are false.
- After reading each statement, you can choose one of three options: TRUE, FALSE, FLAG
- You will win points for correctly identifying the accuracy (i.e., actually True or actually False) of as many claims as possible.** Each correct answer earns you one point.
- If you wish, you can raise a "FLAG" to check the accuracy of each statement instead of selecting TRUE or FALSE. FLAG allows you to fact-check the statement about a congressman/woman. But every time you choose to flag a statement, you will lose 1/4 points. That is, if you choose to check if a claim is actually true or false, it will cost you part of your score, which may affect your total score.
- If you raise a flag, you will learn the actual accuracy of the statement at the end of the study.

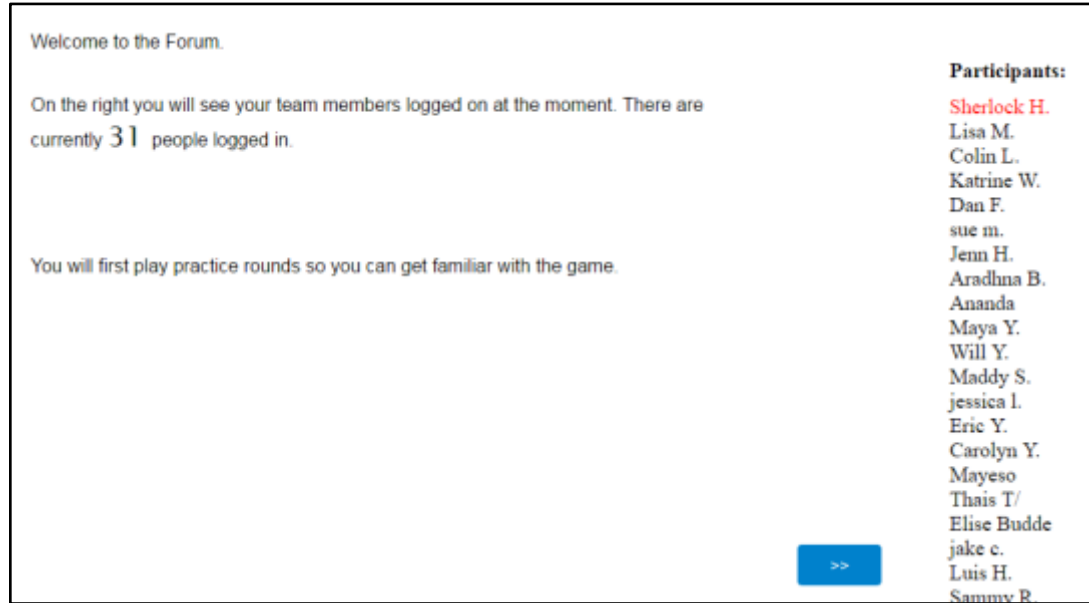
Specifically, the rules are as follows:

1. For every CORRECT identification, you will receive 1 point. (+1)
2. For every INCORRECT identification, you will lose 1 point. (-1)
3. For every fact-checking FLAG, you will lose 1/4 point. (-0.25)

**-If you score within the top 10% of survey participants, you will enter a lottery so you can win a \$100 Amazon gift card.**

Alone condition is shown above. Group conditions were told: “Each member’s score will be combined to form the group’s total score.” and “If your group scores within the top 10% of survey participants, you will enter a lottery so you can win a \$100 Amazon gift card.”

**Fig. S9.** Statement evaluation task instructions, Group-Distinct condition (Experiment 3).



Those assigned to the Group condition saw the same list of 102 participants but with their own name displayed in black text, whereas those in the Alone condition saw their own name displayed alone (e.g., “Sherlock H.”).

**Fig. S10.** Statement evaluation task sample items, Group-Distinct condition (Experiment 3).

The following statements are NOT examples. Please read each statement closely and choose an option below. You will be moved on to the next page automatically if you take more than 60 seconds.

Congresswoman Virginia Foxx urged social security administration to provide equal benefits to same-sex spouses.

---

TRUE
FALSE
FLAG

Born in Thailand, Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth lost both of her legs in the Iraq War and was awarded the Purple Heart.

---

TRUE
FALSE
FLAG

**Participants:**

Sherlock H.  
 Lisa M.  
 Colin L.  
 Katrine W.  
 Dan F.  
 sue m.  
 Jenn H.  
 Aradhna B.  
 Ananda  
 Maya Y.  
 Will Y.  
 Maddy S.  
 jessica l.  
 Eric Y.  
 Carolyn Y.  
 Mayeso  
 Thais T/  
 Elise Budde  
 jake c.  
 Luis H.  
 Sammy R.  
 katie k.  
 james w.  
 Kayleigh K.  
 Natalie H.  
 Wendell A.  
 Neal S.  
 Eva L.  
 James H.  
 Leroy D.  
 Alvaro M.  
 Chris H.

### Experiment 4

**Fig. S11.** Introductory instructions, Traditional News condition (**A**) versus Social Media condition (**B**) (Experiment 4).

**A**

**Headlines**

**Welcome to this study!**

In this survey, you will **evaluate a series of real statements** from an existing media organization's website. This organization shares statements about current social, political and educational issues in the U.S. (For confidentiality reasons, we've named the organization "Headlines".)

In the game you will be playing, your task is to read a series of statements made by the media organization ("Headlines") and **judge the accuracy of each statement**. Some of these statements are true, while others are false.

Please pay close attention to the instructions on the next pages.

**B**

**facebook**

**Welcome to this study!**

In this survey, you will **evaluate a series of real Facebook posts** from an existing media organization. This organization shares statements about current social, political and educational issues in the U.S. (For confidentiality reasons, we've named the organization "Headlines" and changed the profile picture.)

In the game you will be playing, your task is to read a series of statements made by the media organization ("Headlines") and **judge the accuracy of each statement**. Some of these statements are true, while others are false.

Please pay close attention to the instructions on the next pages.

**Fig. S12.** Login page, Traditional News condition (**A**) versus Social Media condition (**B**) (Experiment 4).

**A**

**Headlines**

This game will simulate a typical user experience on Headlines' website. **All participants currently taking this study must log in.**

First, please type your **first name** and **initial of your last name** (e.g., Kate S., James O.) so that we can make a personalized login account for you during the study. Your account will be deleted after the experiment.

No one will be able to see your answers or choices other than the researcher.

**B**

**facebook**

This game will simulate a typical user experience on Facebook. **All participants currently taking this study must log in.**

First, please type your **first name** and **initial of your last name** (e.g., Kate S., James O.) so that we can make a personalized login account for you during the study. Your account will be deleted after the experiment.

No one will be able to see your answers or choices other than the researcher.

**Fig. S13.** Statement evaluation task sample item on the traditional news media platform (**A**) versus social media platform (**B**) as viewed by participants assigned to the Group conditions (Experiment 4).

**A**

**Headlines**

The United States accepted fewer than 1,700 Syrian refugees in fiscal year 2015.

TRUE
FALSE
FLAG

**Participants:**

Kate S.  
 Lisa M.  
 Colin L.  
 Katrine W.  
 Dan F.  
 sue m.  
 Jenn H.  
 Aradhna B.  
 Ananda Maya Y.  
 Will Y.  
 Maddy S.  
 Jessica I.  
 Eric Y.  
 Carolyn Y.  
 Mayeso  
 Thais T/  
 Elise Budde  
 jake c.  
 Luis H.  
 Sammy R.  
 katie k.  
 James w.  
 caleb N.  
 Kayleigh K.  
 Natalie H.  
 Wendell A.  
 Neal S.  
 Eva L.  
 Kamel J.  
 James H.

**B**

**facebook**

Search Facebook

What's on your mind?

Headlines

The United States accepted fewer than 1,700 Syrian refugees in fiscal year 2015.

Headlines.com

Like Comment Share

6 event invites

Merge Underwood and 1 other

TRENDING

Unusus

Samsung-Galaxy Note 7

Hubble Deep Field

See More

SUGGESTED PAGES

See All

**OVACHOR**

**Participants:**

Kate S.  
 Lisa M.  
 Colin L.  
 Katrine W.  
 Dan F.  
 sue m.  
 Jenn H.  
 Aradhna B.  
 Ananda Maya Y.  
 Will Y.  
 Maddy S.  
 Jessica I.  
 Eric Y.  
 Carolyn Y.  
 Mayeso  
 Thais T/  
 Elise Budde  
 jake c.  
 Luis H.  
 Sammy R.  
 katie k.  
 James w.  
 caleb N.  
 Kayleigh K.  
 Natalie H.  
 Wendell A.  
 Neal S.  
 Eva L.  
 Kamel J.  
 James H.

TRUE
FALSE
FLAG



## Experiment 5

**Fig. S14.** Login page, Group-Present condition (**A**) vs. Group-Past condition (**B**) (Experiment 5).

**A**

**Headlines**

We are interested in modes of communication on the Internet.

This game will simulate a typical user experience on Headlines' website. **All participants who are currently taking this study must log in.**

**No one will be able to see your answers from the game.**

---

First, please type your **first name** and **initial of your last name** (e.g., Kate S., James O.) so that we can make a personalized login account for you during the study. Your account will be deleted after the experiment.

**B**

**Headlines**

We are interested in modes of communication on the Internet.

This game will simulate a typical user experience on Headlines' website. **All participants who have previously taken this study have logged in.**

**No one will be able to see your answers from the game.**

---

First, please type your **first name** and **initial of your last name** (e.g., Kate S., James O.) so that we can make a personalized login account for you during the study. Your account will be deleted after the experiment.

**Fig. S15.** Statement evaluation task instructions, Group-Present condition (**A**) vs. Group-Past condition (**B**) (Experiment 5).

**A**

**Headlines**

On the right side of the page, you will see the **usernames of other participants who are currently logged onto the forum.**

There are currently **103** people logged at the moment. These participants will also be separately evaluating the **same** statements as the ones you will see shortly. (No one will see your answers.)

To get you familiar with the game, you will see an example of a statement on the next page.

**Currently logged on:**

Sherlock H.  
 Lisa M.  
 Colin L.  
 Katrine W.  
 Dan F.  
 sue m.  
 Jenn H.  
 Aradhna B.  
 Ananda Maya Y.  
 Will Y.  
 Maddy S.  
 jessica l.  
 Eric Y.  
 Carolyn Y.  
 Mayeso  
 Thais T/  
 Elise Budde  
 jake c.  
 Tania H.

**B**

**Headlines**

On the right side of the page, you will see the **usernames of past participants who have logged onto the forum and have taken this survey.**

There were **103** people who had logged on and completed this survey **one week ago**. These participants evaluated the **same** statements as the ones you will see shortly.

To get you familiar with the game, you will see an example of a statement on the next page.

**Previously logged on:**

Lisa M.  
 Colin L.  
 Katrine W.  
 Dan F.  
 sue m.  
 Jenn H.  
 Aradhna B.  
 Ananda Maya Y.  
 Will Y.  
 Maddy S.  
 jessica l.  
 Eric Y.  
 Carolyn Y.  
 Mayeso  
 Thais T/  
 Elise Budde  
 jake c.  
 Tania H.

## Experiment 6

**Fig. S17.** Introductory instructions (Experiment 6).

Welcome to the survey.

In this survey, you will read various statements made by two current U.S. politicians prior to an election. These statements were taken from an actual Facebook page used by the politicians. This is a type of political forum where the candidates present their achievements and positions.

In a moment, you will be directed to a screen shot of this Facebook page, and play a game where you evaluate the statements made by the two candidates on this page. Please pay close attention to the following instructions.

Please look at the page for as long as you want and press >> when you are ready. The name of the page has been changed to "Political Forum" for confidentiality reasons.



**Fig. S18.** Login page (Experiment 6).

The game will simulate a typical user's experience in the forum.

First, please write down your first name and initial of your last name (e.g., Kate S., James O.), so that we can make a personalized log-in account for you in the forum. Your account will be deleted after the experiment.

**Fig. S19.** Task-specific instructions (Experiment 6).

GAME RULES

-Each participant will read a series of statements made by two existing U.S. politicians (referred to as Candidate A and Candidate B) prior to an election, and judge the accuracy of each of them. Some of these statements are true, while others are false.

-After reading each statement, you can choose one of three options: TRUE, FALSE, FLAG

**-You will win points for correctly identifying the accuracy (i.e., actually True or actually False) of as many claims as possible.** Each correct answer earns you one point.

-If you wish, you can raise a "FLAG" to check the accuracy of each statement instead of selecting TRUE or FALSE. FLAG allows you to fact-check the statement from a candidate. But every time you choose to flag a statement, you will lose 1/4 points. That is, if you choose to check if a claim is actually true or false, it will cost you part of your score, which may affect your total score.

-If you raise a flag, you will learn the actual accuracy of the statement at the end of the study.

Specifically, the rules are as follows:

1. For every CORRECT identification, you will receive 1 point. (+1)
2. For every INCORRECT identification, you will lose 1 point. (-1)
3. For every fact-checking FLAG, you will lose 1/4 point. (-0.25)

**-If you score within the top 10% of survey participants, you will enter a lottery so you can win a \$100 Amazon gift card.**

**Fig. S20.** Statement evaluation task instructions, Group-Large condition (Experiment 6).

<p>Welcome to the Forum.</p> <p>On the right you will see the other forum members who are currently logged in. There are currently <b>103</b> people logged in.</p> <p>You will first play practice rounds so you can get familiar with the game.</p>	<p><b>Participants:</b></p> <p>Sherlock H.          Lisa M.          Colin L.          Katrine W.          Dan F.          sue m.          Jenna H.          Aradhna B.          Ananda Maya Y.          Will Y.          Maddy S.          jessica l.          Eric Y.          Carolyn Y.          Mayeso          Thais T/          Elise Budde          jake c.          Luis H.</p>
---	--

**Fig. S21.** Statement evaluation task sample items, Group-Large condition (Experiment 6).

The following statements were made by Candidate A prior to an election. These are NOT examples.

Please read each statement closely and choose an option below. You will be moved on to the next page automatically if you take more than 60 seconds.

Homicides last year increased by the largest amount in 25 years.

TRUE

FALSE

FLAG

53% of Americans disapprove of Obamacare.

TRUE

FALSE

FLAG

**Participants:**

Sherlock H.  
 Lisa M.  
 Colin L.  
 Katrine W.  
 Dan F.  
 sue m.  
 Jenn H.  
 Aradhna B.  
 Ananda Maya Y.  
 Will Y.  
 Maddy S.  
 jessica l.  
 Eric Y.  
 Carolyn Y.  
 Mayeso  
 Thais T/  
 Elise Budde  
 jake c.  
 Luis H.  
 Sammy R.  
 katie k.  
 james w.  
 caleb N.  
 Kayleigh K.  
 Natalie H.  
 Wendell A.  
 Neal S.  
 Eva L.  
 Kamel J.  
 James H.  
 Leroy D.  
 Alvaro M.  
 Chris H.  
 james o  
 Bill D  
 Elyse S  
 ta s.  
 Avril E.

Five statements were presented on each page. Instructions were identical for Candidate B.

## Experiment 7

**Fig. S22.** Login page, Group (A) vs. Group-Accountable (B) conditions (Experiment 7).

**A**

Headlines

We are interested in modes of communication on the Internet.

This game will simulate a typical user experience on Headlines' website. **All participants currently taking this study must log in.**

**No one will be able to see your answers from the game.**

---

First, please type your **first name** and **initial of your last name** (e.g., Kate S., James O.) so that we can make a personalized login account for you during the study. Your account will be deleted after the experiment.

**B**

Headlines

We are interested in modes of communication on the Internet.

This game will simulate a typical user experience on Headlines' website. **All participants currently taking this study must log in.**

At the end of the study, **your answers from the game (i.e., the total number of statements you marked True, False, or Flagged) will be displayed to the other study participants who are currently logged in.**

---

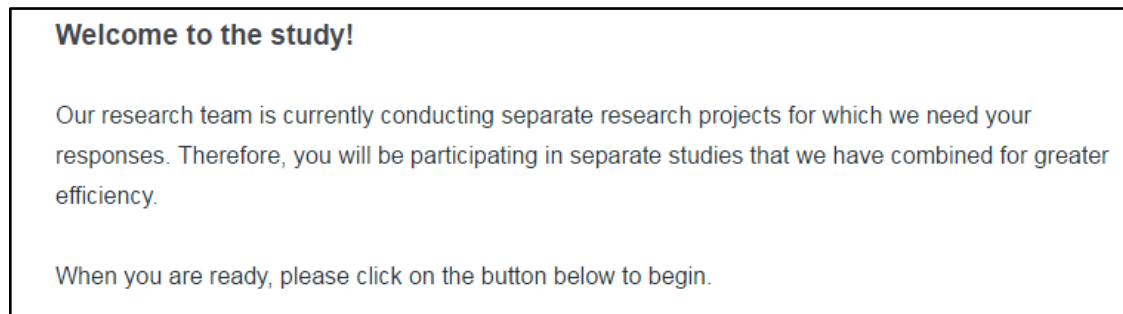
First, please type your **first name** and **initial of your last name** (e.g., Kate S., James O.) so that we can make a personalized login account for you during the study. Your account will be deleted after the experiment.

Those assigned to the Alone condition view identical stimuli but with only their name on the sidebar.



## *Experiment 8*

**Fig. S23.** Introductory instructions (Experiment 8).



Participants completed two tasks presented and described as unrelated ones, proceeding from the Recall Study immediately to the Word Search, then to the statement evaluation task as in previous experiments.

**Fig. S24.** Recall Study: Instructions, Control (**A**) vs. Vigilance (**B**) (Experiment 8).

**A**

Recall Study
<p>In this study, we are interested in how people change the layout of their rooms over time. By layout, we mean the <u>objects and their organization</u> in a room.</p> <p>Please take a moment to recall:</p> <p>(a) <b>at least 3</b> different <b>objects, furniture, or features</b> of your room in the <b>past</b>, and</p> <p>(b) <b>at least 3</b> different <b>objects, furniture, or features</b> of your <b>current</b> room.</p>
<p>Please describe how the <b>layout</b> of your room is different now from what it was when you were growing up.</p> <p>Specifically, what <b>furniture, objects, or features</b> have been added, removed, or re-positioned? Which ones stayed the way they were before?</p> <div></div>

**B****Recall Study**

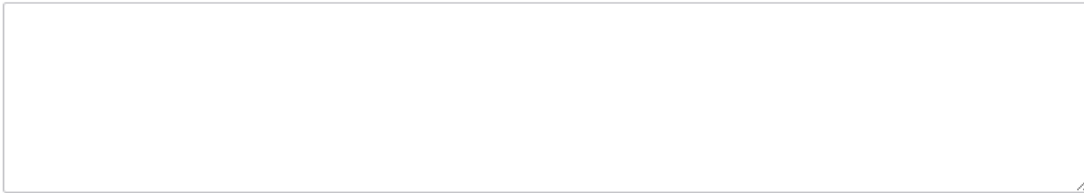
In this study, we are interested in how your personal standards have changed over time. By **standards**, we mean things that you think you ought to accomplish.

Please take a moment to recall:

- (a) **at least 3** different **duties, obligations, and responsibilities** you had in the **past**, and
- (b) **at least 3** different **duties, obligations, and responsibilities** you have **currently**.

Describe how your **duties and obligations** are different now from what they were when you were growing up.

Specifically, what **responsibilities** do you think you ought to meet at this point in your life? What **responsibilities** did you have to meet when you were a child?

A large empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to write their answers to the questions above. It occupies the lower half of the form.

**Fig. S25.** Word Search: Instructions, Control (**A**) vs. Vigilance (**B**) (Experiment 8).

**A**

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Word Search</u></p> <p>This study is a pretest for another project in development. In a moment, you will see a word search with a list of <b>9 target words</b> on a randomly generated topic. By "target words", we mean <b>English nouns</b> hidden in the word search that belong to that topic.</p> <p>Your task is to <b>find and list the target words belonging to the topic</b>. These words can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal, and they can be written either forwards or backwards.</p> <p>You will have <b>2 minutes</b> before the page automatically moves forward.</p> <p>Please click &gt;&gt; when you are ready.</p>
--

**B**

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Word Search</u></p> <p>This study is a pretest for another project in development. In a moment, you will see a word search with a list of <b>9 target words</b> on a randomly generated topic. By "target words", we mean <b>English nouns</b> hidden in the word search that belong to that topic.</p> <p>Your task is to <b>find and list the target words belonging to the topic</b>. These words can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal, and they can be written either forwards or backwards.</p> <p><b>As you do the task, AVOID MISSING any target words and try NOT to miss more than one-third of all possible words.</b></p> <p>You will have <b>2 minutes</b> before the page automatically moves forward.</p> <p>Please click &gt;&gt; when you are ready.</p>
--

**Fig. S26.** Word search puzzle presented to all participants prior to the statement evaluation task (Experiment 8).

**Category: ANIMALS**

**Total # of target words hidden: 9**

T	T	H	T	U	D	C	C	J	S	R	Q
V	F	A	J	O	Q	F	H	B	A	P	M
K	O	G	R	I	U	R	A	B	S	P	P
G	I	W	E	W	O	G	B	I	A	W	O
B	V	G	X	H	L	I	I	D	F	V	C
S	E	J	W	L	T	G	F	L	V	C	X
Z	M	A	P	V	A	V	S	X	N	G	F
Z	O	S	V	G	I	R	A	F	F	E	L
S	N	I	C	E	O	T	O	D	H	J	O
J	K	C	C	F	R	O	G	F	N	M	W
X	E	F	J	R	N	Z	M	J	T	A	T
Z	Y	E	L	T	R	U	T	M	U	U	P

---

Identify words that fit the category in the word search above:

Target word 1:	<input type="text"/>
Target word 2:	<input type="text"/>
Target word 3:	<input type="text"/>
Target word 4:	<input type="text"/>
Target word 5:	<input type="text"/>
Target word 6:	<input type="text"/>
Target word 7:	<input type="text"/>
Target word 8:	<input type="text"/>
Target word 9:	<input type="text"/>

Participants had two minutes to find as many target words (out of 9 total possible) hidden in a “randomly generated” word search. No word bank was provided.

## *Proofreading Experiment*

**Fig. S27.** General instructions.

**Proofreading Study**

In this study, you will read a series of randomly selected passages on a variety of topics. Your task is to **identify all the errors that appear in the passage**.

Specifically, you should try to identify the errors as **accurately AND quickly** as possible.

**Fig. S28.** Task-specific instructions, Group condition.

**INSTRUCTIONS** (please read carefully)

On the next page, you will see a series of randomly selected passages with a number of different kinds of errors. The errors will occur only **within words and short phrases**, NOT in terms of punctuation or across sentences. These errors can be spelling or grammatical errors.

As you read the passages, please identify any **word or words that you believe is incorrect or inappropriate in the context of the passage**. Identify errors in the passage by typing the word(s) in the boxes provided **as they appear** exactly in the passage. You **do NOT need to correct the errors** that you have identified.

You will be given **4 minutes** to read and identify the errors across all passages. After 4 minutes, the page will automatically move forward.

Remember, your goal is to identify the errors appearing in the passages as **accurately AND quickly** as you can.

**Participants:**

Sherlock H.  
 Lisa M.  
 Colin L.  
 Katrine W.  
 Dan F.  
 sue m.  
 Jenn H.  
 Aradhna B.  
 Ananda Maya Y.  
 Will Y.  
 Maddy S.  
 jessica l.  
 Eric Y.  
 Carolyn Y.  
 Mayeso  
 Thais T/  
 Elise Budde  
 jake c.  
 Luis H.  
 Sammy R.  
 katie k.  
 james w.  
 caleb N.

**Fig. S29.** Proofreading passages, as viewed by participants assigned to the Group condition.

<p>As primitive societies developed, the government, represented by the cheif or the king, gradually began taking over the protection of persens and property and the punishment of offenders in the name of public piece and order. The basic concept behind the intervention of government, however, continued to be that of retribution: A balancing of the scales of justice. The scales tended to be balanced on the side of the superior power of the state. The deth penalty was the most common response to common crime.</p>	<p><b>Participants:</b></p> <p>Sherlock H.          Lisa M.          Colin L.          Katrine W.          Dan F.          sue m.          Jenn H.          Aradhna B.          Ananda Maya Y.          Will Y.          Maddy S.          jessica l.          Eric Y.          Carolyn Y.          Mayeso          Thais T/          Elise Budde          jake c.          Luis H.          Sammy R.          katie k.          james w.          caleb N.          Kayleigh K.          Natalie H.          Wendell A.          Neal S.          Eva L.          Kamel J.          James H.          Larry D.</p>
<p>The Albert Bridge is a rode bridge over the River Thames in West London, connecting Chelsea on the north bank to Battersea on the south bank. Designed and bilt by Rowland Mason Ordish in 1873 as an Ordish– Lefeuvre system-modifeid, cabel-stayed bridge, it proven to be structurally unsound, and so between 1884 and 1887 Sir Joseph Bazalgette incorporates some of the design elements of a suspension bridge.</p>	
<p>Elephants are herbavorous and can be found in different habitats including savanahs, forests, deserts and marshes. They prefer to stay near water. They are considered to be keystone speceis due to there impact on their enviroments. Other animals tend to keep their distance, and predators such as lions, tigers, hyenas and wild dogs usually target only the young elephants (or “calves”). Females (“cows”) tends to live in family groups, which can concist of one female with her calves or several related females with offspring.</p>	
<p>The Battle of Chaldiran or Chaldoran occurred on August 23, 1514 and ended with a victory for the Ottoman Empire over the Safavid Empire. As a result, the Ottomans have gained immediate control over eastern Anatolia and northern Iraq. The battle, however, was just the begining of 41 years of destructive war between the too empires that only ended in 1555 with the Traety of Amasya. While the Ottomans often had the upper hand, the Persians for the most part hold their ground.</p>	

All respondents saw the same four passages on a single page (22-line text, four separate paragraphs; presentation order counterbalanced). Each passage contained between 67 to 85 words, with a mean length of 79.75 words, and contained 4-6 errors of varying complexity (e.g., simple misspelling, verb tense errors, etc.).



**Fig. S30.** Error detection task response format.

<p>Please write the errors that you have identified in the above passages (ONE error per box).  Only identify an error by <b>writing down the word(s) as they appear</b> exactly in the passage; <b>do NOT correct the errors</b> that you have identified.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> We have provided more error boxes below than there actually are in the passages.</p>		<p>Timothy  Katie M.  Silvia B.  Bianca M.  Kristin S.  Antonio B.  Mia N.  Garret W.  Jackie O.  Gita J.  Anna G.  Patricia M.  oded n  Sarah B.  Diane M.  Cathy G.  Mark C.  Lesley P.  Tim C.  Troy S.  Ed T.  Joseph B.  Keith D.  Marie R.  David S.  Ebony M.  Tina McGov...</p>
Error #1	<input type="text"/>	
Error #2	<input type="text"/>	
Error #3	<input type="text"/>	
Error #4	<input type="text"/>	
Error #5	<input type="text"/>	
Error #6	<input type="text"/>	
Error #7	<input type="text"/>	
Error #8	<input type="text"/>	
Error #9	<input type="text"/>	
Error #10	<input type="text"/>	
Error #11	<input type="text"/>	
Error #12	<input type="text"/>	
Error #13	<input type="text"/>	

Participants were given four minutes to read and identify errors by typing the incorrect word(s) at the bottom of the text (one error per box). A total of 25 boxes were provided (21 errors existed in the text).